

# Actions During Times of International Tension

**Produced by:** Learner Services Officer

**Policy approved:** Academic Board 6/5/03 Minute 226  
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## **Preamble to the Policy**

### **Equal Opportunities**

The College shall comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005), the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Human Rights Act 1998 (or any enactment modifying or replacing them) and all relevant statutory duties in respect of equal opportunities.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability Statement**

The College shall have particular regard to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005) in respect of this policy.

The Act applies to people who are disabled according to the definition of disability in the DDA 1995. That is, a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

That effect must be:

1. Substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
2. Adverse, and
3. Long-term (that is, has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

The College is committed to take all reasonable steps to implement or adjust the policy taking in the circumstances of each individual. Reasonable steps may include, for example, alternative format documents, special arrangements for meetings (please note the examples are not exhaustive).

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The College is a cosmopolitan institution, with staff and students originating from more than 60 countries. It welcomes exchange students and visitors from many regions of the world, while its own staff and students also go abroad to study, to teach and to pursue research. It is understandable that in any periods of international tension the College will be concerned for the well-being of its staff and students. The concern will also involve the relatives and friends of our staff and students.
- 1.2 The College has a duty of care towards all staff and students (wherever they may be) and also to all those visitors it welcomes to its campuses. The College will exercise that duty with all due diligence and will not shirk from taking hard decisions that may prove necessary. It has in place a comprehensive planning and support structure designed to ensure that, no matter what challenges are thrown up, the daily life of the College can be maintained.
- 1.3 The College is an educational and training organisation. Its members are here to work as students, teachers etc. Their nationality, racial type, and religious or political beliefs are irrelevant to this activity. All members of the College community have the right to be treated with respect. Experience has shown that despite very difficult situations elsewhere in the world, disputes on campus arising from political, racial or religious differences are very rare. However in the unlikely event that such a dispute occurs the College will take a firm stance and will not allow it to sour the friendly and relaxed atmosphere for which it has long been noted.
- 1.4 Parents, relatives and friends of those at the College should feel reassured that visitors are safer in Wales than in many other countries. The College seeks to foster a community that is open, tolerant and liberal.
- 1.5 This policy will be referred to at any point in time where international events may result in tensions arising to affect the College community. The Policy will work alongside existing policies such as student/staff discipline, race equality, bullying, equal opportunities, health and safety and disaster recovery.

## **2. Critical Actions**

- 2.1 At a time of international tension the following critical actions will be considered. The Principal will allocate these actions to key personnel when an event arises:
- 2.2 Information and advice:
  - 2.2.1 Critical information on support services within the institution and community will be advertised e.g. Learner Services, SW Police ethnic minority unit.
  - 2.2.2 Issue advice to staff and students advising against involvement in overtly political or confrontational behaviour.
  - 2.2.3 Ensure procedures for reporting racist incidents are promoted

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- 2.2.4 Liaise with partner institutions to communicate accurate information.
- 2.2.5 Ensure any students abroad or going abroad are well briefed.
- 2.2.5 Review on campus activities with Student Union and Police to minimise extremist activity.
- 2.2.6 MIS to produce information for managers relevant to the needs of the situation.
- 2.2.7 Legal position on use of personal data to be reviewed in case requests emerge.
- 2.3 Security and Estates.
  - 2.3.1 Review institutional security procedures on campus.
  - 2.3.2 Inform staff and students of any changes in security procedures.
  - 2.3.4 Take advice from agencies e.g. Police.
  - 2.3.5 Review the need for 24hour emergency contacts.
  - 2.3.6 Heighten removal of graffiti and inflammatory posters/ leaflets.
- 2.4 Counselling and Support.
  - 2.4.1 Assess the need to respond to increased demand for counselling/mentoring.
  - 2.4.2 Increase publicity of Counselling and other support.
  - 2.4.2 Emphasise duty of care to all staff.
- 2.5. Learning Issues
  - 2.5.1 Consider support for students whose learning may be interrupted. E.g. territorial and reservists called up, internment of foreign students.
  - 2.5.2 Consider how some learning topics events may need to be modified to avoid sensitive subjects or to reduce health and safety risks.
- 2.6 Personnel Issues
  - 2.6.1 Identify any personnel affected and give clear and early decisions where required.
  - 2.6.2 Remind personnel to take care not to inflame feelings inadvertently.
- 2.7 Financial Issues
  - 2.7.1 Review budgets to take account of any costs or lost income.

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- 2.7.2 Investigate the ways in which students may face financial problems
- 2.8 Annex A is a template of information given to students and staff in March 2003 during the Iraq conflict.
- 3. Disaster Recovery**
  - 3.1 In the event that there is a major incident affecting the community or assets of the College the Disaster Recover Policy will be invoked.
- 4. Monitoring and Review**
  - 4.1 This policy will be monitored periodically with a formal review undertaken every four years.

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## **Annexe A Advice to the staff and students of Coleg Morgannwg during times of International Tension**

It is difficult to avoid talk of war at the moment. Newspapers, radio and TV focus on little else. You will no doubt understand the challenges a multi-cultural community faces at times like this. It may be the first time you have been part of such a community. We have more than 60 different nationalities learning with the College and the College's prime concern is the safety and well-being of all our students and the maintenance of cultural harmony.

We would urge you to carry on as normal but to be vigilant in your observance of common sense safety measures. Make sure you look after yourself and do whatever you can to act in the best interests of those around you. Whilst we understand that war may be at the forefront of people's minds, we would ask that you exercise tact and diplomacy in discussing these issues, especially in culturally mixed groups. You will inevitably encounter varied opinions to which individual colleagues and students have a right. Try to see the differences objectively and avoid making judgements.

The College has a Race Equality Policy to protect all staff and students. Please inform Campus Services or any member of staff if you experience or witness any behaviour that makes you feel uncomfortable. We want you to enjoy your time at the college and to be successful in what you do. We also want you to experience all the positive aspects of being part of a multi-cultural community. It is for this reason that we ask for your help in making sure that the College remains a place where everyone can feel safe and confident.

We would like to offer the following advice:

1. Continue your normal routine.
2. Be vigilant in your observance of common sense safety measures and report anything that causes you concern to an appropriate member of staff.
3. Always behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner. If you witness or experience anything that makes you uncomfortable, report it to an appropriate member of staff.
4. Exercise tact and diplomacy in discussing current world events, especially in culturally mixed groups. A person's connection with the tension may not be obvious e.g. they may have relatives involved in the forces, been involved in past conflicts or possibly be worried about friends and relatives living elsewhere.
5. Try to see differences of opinion objectively and avoid making judgements.
6. If you are an international student, locate your embassy website and check regularly for information and advice.
7. Some embassies request that you register while in the UK. You may like to do this.

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8. If you are travelling overseas check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)) for up to date advice about your destination countries and follow the advice given.
9. If you need further help or advice contact Campus Services staff.